

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LENDING 00910 251256Z

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ERDA-05 AID-05 CEA-01 CIAE-00
COME-00 EPG-02 DODE-00 EB-08 FEAE-00 FPC-01 H-01
INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 OMB-01 PM-05
USIA-06 OES-07 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04 TRSE-00 ACDA-07
AGRE-00 /103 W

-----065052 251452Z /46

R 251225Z JUL 77

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3330

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L L E N I N G R A D 0910

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ENRG, PINT, UR

SUBJ: LENINGRAD GAS SHORTAGE

REF: 1976 LENINGRAD 1546, 1976 LENINGRAD 1507

1. SUMMARY: LENINGRAD AUTOMOBILE OWNERS, ONCE AGAIN, HAVE BEEN EXPERIENCING A MINOR GASOLINE SHORTAGE SINCE JULY 20, 1977. THE SHORTAGE HAS DEVELOPED IN A MANNER REMINISCENT OF THE TEMPORARY SHORTAGE OF SEPTEMBER 1976 WHICH ENDED AFTER THE FALL HARVEST. END SUMMARY.

2. ON JULY 20, 1977, LONG LINES OF AUTOMOBILES WERE OBSERVED AT SEVERAL GASOLINE STATIONS IN LENINGRAD. CONSULATE GENERAL VEHICLES WERE GIVEN PRIORITY SERVICE AT THE HIGH OCTANE PUMPS (AI-95), BUT SOVIET CITIZENS WAITED IN BLOCK-LONG QUEUES FOR THE LOWER OCTANE FUEL (AI-93). SEVERAL DRIVERS AND ONE ATTENDANT CONFIRMED THAT AI-93 SALES WERE LIMITED TO TWENTY LITERS.

3. THIS SITUATION CONTINUED THROUGH THE WEEKEND (JULY 23/24) AND WE NOTED THAT SEVERAL GASOLINE
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STATIONS WERE CLOSED DURING NORMAL WORKING HOURS. CONGEN OFFICER OBSERVED THE SAME CONDITIONS AT GASOLINE STATIONS ON THE ROAD BETWEEN LENINGRAD AND ZELENOGORSK TO THE NORTH. ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE CONGEN STAFF OBSERVED CLOSED GASOLINE STATIONS ALONG THE ROAD BETWEEN LENINGRAD AND KRASNOYE SELO TO THE SOUTH. DRIVERS ALONG THESE ROUTES COMPLAINED THAT THEY WERE HAVING DIFFICULTY

PURCHASING AI-93 AND LOWER OCTANE GASOLINES. ON MONDAY, JULY 25, THE SITUATION SEEMED TO BE WORSE IN LENINGRAD, AS ONE CENTRALLY LOCATED STATION POSTED A SIGN WHICH ANNOUNCED THAT SALES OF AI-93 WOULD BEGIN ONLY AFTER 1200 HOURS, AND OTHER STATIONS NORMALLY OPEN FOR BUSINESS AT 0830 HOURS WERE NOT SELLING GASOLINE AT NINE O'CLOCK.

4. COMMENT: AS INDICATED REFTELS, THE GASOLINE SHORTAGE IN THE FALL OF 1976 MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO EFFORTS TO MAXIMIZE THE USE OF TRUCKS AND OTHER VEHICLES IN THE HARVEST. WE HAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR THE FACT THAT SHORTAGE THIS TIME HAS DEVELOPED SO MUCH EARLIER IN THE YEAR, ASSUMING THAT SHORTAGE BOTH YEARS RELATED TO AGRICULTURE. THE EXPLANATION MAY BE QUITE DIFFERENT, OF COURSE, AND REFLECT EITHER LOCALIZED OR MORE GENERALIZED PROBLEM OF PRODUCT MIX AND/OR DISTRIBUTION DIFFICULTIES. ONE THING IS QUITE CLEAR; DRIVERS OF PRIVATE AUTOMOBILES IN THE LENINGRAD AREA STAND A GOOD CHANCE OF BEING DEPRIVED OF ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF GASOLINE FOR A LONGER PERIOD THIS YEAR THAN LAST, WITH A RESULTING HIGHER LEVEL OF FRUSTRATION AND ANNOYANCE. NEUBERT

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
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Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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